



*Annual Presentation to the*  
**SENATE ENERGY, UTILITIES, AND  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

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# The Public Advocates Office

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*The Voice of Consumers Making a Difference*

**MARCH 12, 2019**

Elizabeth Echols  
Director





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*The Voice of Consumers Making a Difference*

## OUR MISSION

Obtain the lowest possible rate for service consistent with safety, reliability, and the state's environmental goals.

# WHAT WE DO

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Public Advocates Office PG&E Site Visit for Tree Removal in Calaveras County



Director Echols at Advanced Energy Economy Pathway to 2050 Energy Symposium in Sacramento



Public Advocates Office Staff Viewing Battery at SDG&E Site Visit



Public Advocates Office Staff Site Visit at SDG&E in Escondido

## 2018 CUSTOMER SAVINGS

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In **2018**, our office saved customers over **\$3.3 Billion** in reduced rates, avoided rate increases, and customer refunds.

# POLICY EFFORTS

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Achieve the Best Value for Consumers by Ensuring:

- Access & Affordability
- Safety and Reliability
- Environmental Goals



## ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

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- **Affordability Rulemaking**

Advocated for requiring utilities to disclose the cumulative effect of recent, pending, and future rate increases when seeking a revenue increase outside a general rate case.

- **Low-Income & Disadvantaged Community Proceedings**

Developed framework and key objectives for increasing access to affordable energy in San Joaquin Valley's disadvantaged communities.

- **Water General Rate Case and Cost of Capital Proceedings**

Saved customers over \$206 million in the California American Water Company and San Jose Water Company general rate cases and two water cost of capital proceedings.

- **Century Link/Level 3 Agreement**

Reached agreement with Century Link/Level 3 to build infrastructure for unserved and underserved communities. (Benefitting 6 rural counties and 929 households in Northern California).

- **Community Based Efforts**

Supported pilot programs to make it easier for customers to participate in the LifeLine Program by partnering with social service agencies and community-based organizations.

# SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

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Advocated for improved safety and accountability related to utility infrastructure and operations.

- **Southern California Gas Company and San Diego Gas & Electric's Line Safety**  
Helped ensure the safety of communities in close proximity to a natural gas transmission line (Line 1600) by successfully advocating for proper pressure testing of the line.
- **Enhanced Consumer Protections**  
Partnered with the CPUC to establish interim measures to reduce disconnections in 2019 and set uniform criteria for disconnections during extreme weather events.
- **Safety Model Assessment Proceeding**  
Partnered with other parties to develop a framework to identify how utilities should assess, measure, and mitigate safety risks.
- **Water Quality**  
Advocated successfully for construction of additional iron and manganese treatment plants for Golden State Water to address persistent discolored water issues.
- **Southern California Edison Aberhill Transmission Project Proceeding**  
Saved customers \$315 million by successfully arguing that there was no need for SCE's proposed transmission project.

# ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

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- **Transportation Electrification Proposals**  
Saved customers \$271 million by evaluating and making recommendations on Transportation Electrification proposals by the 3 large investor-owned electric utilities.
- **Distribution Resource Planning**  
Continued to advocate for increased transparency of Distribution Resource Planning to allow for more distributed energy resources on our grid.
- **Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS)**  
Advocated for revisions to RPS rules and methodologies that support increased reliance on renewable resources and protect customers from significant cost increases.
- **Water Conservation**  
Recommended Golden State Water reduce its reliance on the state's limited water supply and eliminate or delay the need to construct costly water supply projects by maintaining its conservation program and funding.



## 2019 PRIORITIES

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### GOAL

Achieve the best value for California consumers across the regulated industry sectors – energy, water, and telecommunications consistent with the state’s safety, reliability, and environmental goals.

- Affordable and Equitable Access
- Safe and Reliable Service
- State’s Environmental Goals



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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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